

January 6, 2009 - House Democratic Leadership Unveils New Rules Package

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Leadership Unveils New Rules Package

Common-sense Reforms to Keep Congress Working for
America, Continue to Restore Integrity to Institution

Washington, DC - House Democratic
Leaders today
unveiled the proposed Democratic Rules package for the 111th
Congress, common-sense reforms to the House Rules will enable Congress to work
more effectively.

"Our ability to address the daunting challenges facing our nation after years of neglect hinges on our ability to legislate effectively, with fiscal restraint, and without political gamesmanship. The American people are demanding results from their leaders and these common-sense reforms will help deliver them," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

"At a time when our nation is confronting enormous challenges, these common-sense reforms to the Rules will make it possible for the House to work more effectively. This Rules package continues our efforts to restore the integrity of this institution, so that we can quickly address the issues facing average Americans," said House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer.

"The common sense reforms included in the proposed rules package for the 111th Congress bring the change that the American people are calling for-an end to business as usual in Washington. This rules package continues the efforts of the Democratic majority to restore accountability, integrity and effectiveness to the institution of the House of Representatives," said House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn.

"Through making common-sense changes to the House Rules, Democrats are keeping our commitment to the American people to continue restoring integrity to Congress," House Rules Committee Chair Louise M. Slaughter said. "These changes not only make great sense, they will make Congress more effective in solving the challenges facing our country."

In the 110th Congress, Democrats adopted critical measures to help restore integrity and accountability to the House. These measures included banning gifts from lobbyists, prohibiting the use of corporate jets, mandating ethics training for all House employees, establishing a new, independent Office of Congressional Ethics, and ensuring transparency for spending earmarks by requiring their full disclosure in all bills and conference reports.

The common-sense rules changes proposed this year will help bring back the original intent of the rules: to provide order while protecting the integrity of the institution and enabling Congress to help solve the complex challenges facing our nation.

Highlights of Key Reforms

Common-sense reforms incorporated into the House Rules Package include:

- Closing the loophole that allowed 'lame duck' Members to negotiate employment contracts in secret, to ensure full transparency in future negotiations

- Removing reference to term limits for Committee Chairs from this package, to remove political considerations from the official rules of the House

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Making commonsense changes to the motion to recommit that preserve the Minority's legitimate right to present policy alternatives while preventing the abusive practice of working to kill key measures that have broad, bipartisan support from the American people by raising unrelated amendments for the sole purpose of scoring political points and forcing votes for electoral advantage.

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Maintaining strong PAYGO rules that demonstrate Democrats' firm commitment fiscal discipline

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Codifying additional budget earmark reforms adopted mid-term in the 110th Congress, resulting in even further transparency and accountability in the earmark process

For fact sheets on the changes to the House rules, visit: <http://democraticleader.house.gov>

For a full list of changes to the House rules, visit: www.rules.house.gov

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